

14 East Culver Street
Phoenix, Arizona
September 24, 1938

W. A. Swanberg, Editor
INSIDE DETECTIVE
149 Madison Avenue
New York City

Dear Mr. Swanberg:

Currently, there seems to be considerable interest in various sex exposes. Here in the rugged west where individuality has long been considered a virtue, we might expect independence among the ladies who sell their charms. But no: "chain-store luv" pervades the field.

About a year ago the City Commission here staged a quickie campaign to clean up the city. As a result the girls all moved upstairs, raised their prices in order to meet the fine, and the syndicates took over.

Recently in Tucson, Bill Johnson, editor of the Citizen, has disclosed situations where alliances have existed between common flatfoots and the gals. In some instances the cops were acting as procurors and the Citizen has been attempting to bring about the discharge of the chief of police along with a thorough investigation of vice conditions.

Both Phoenix and Tucson are winter resort towns. Hollywood and the Pacific coast are less than four hundred miles away. The syndicates usually have headquarters in Hollywood and operate there, in Phoenix, Tucson, El Paso, and Dallas. The girls make the circuit.

Only in our smaller towns does the independent house still exist.

Would you be interested in seeing copy on "chain-store luv in the Wild West", with pictures of the syndicate houses in Phoenix and perhaps Tucson.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Shadegg

14 East Culver Street
Phoenix, Arizona
October 4, 1938

W. A. Swanberg, Editor
INSIDE DETECTIVE
149 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Swanberg:

Here is the precise situation on the prostitutes. In Phoenix, the present city administration denies that such things exist, but has assigned a police squad to be sure that the girls are fined regularly. Every house in town contributes considerable to the city. An Italian by the name of Grosho holds the lease on five of the buildings used. He, in turn, subleases to the operators. His connection with the city has never been legally established, but it exists, nevertheless. There are three houses operated by syndicates. They move the girls around between Los Angeles, Phoenix, El Paso, and Dallas.

The existence of the syndicates has never been proven. However, I doubt that any madam would sue in order to establish her legal status as an independent. The houses subleased from Grosho constitute in fact a local syndicate although his take is called rent instead of a split.

In Tucson, the Citizen's campaign continue. Three or four policeman have been discharged for their activities in the district. The specific charge brought against two of them was that they found an unemployed girl in need of food and shelter; instead of taking her to any of the welfare, they arranged to place her in a house and take a cut of her earnings.

My idea on the piece was not to particularly expose the politicians connection with the prostitutes, but rather to contrast the old West's free and easy independence with the present conditions.

The present city gang might feel a little hurt because they ran on a clean-up platform. However, I hardly think they would sue. And if they should, we could easily prove conditions as they exist.

I hope you can use the Judd yarn. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

October 5, 1938

Dear Mr. Swanberg:

I have discovered these things since writing yesterday's letter. Grosho, known locally as the Dago, in fact, operates a syndicate here. He not only holds the leases, but dictates the operations as well.

I doubt very much if I could prove this. On the other hand, I doubt if he would sue anyone, though he might complain to me if he ever discovered I wrote the piece. Last Saturday night, there was an attempted gangland assassination here. One, Jack Durant, took a couple shots at Doc Stribble. Both of them are ex-convicts, both gamblers, both pimps.

Yesterday, after writing you, I spent the afternoon with a good friend who is chief deputy sheriff of Maricopa County. He told me that Jack Durant has been procuring girls for Grosho's houses for three or four years. Durant makes the contacts in San Francisco and Los Angeles, brings or sends the girls over, and Grosho distributes them among his madams. He said Durant also brought in narcotics.

I asked why the federal government had never taken any action, and my friend said it was a mystery to him since the situation was common knowledge. However, it is a practice here to let the city take care of their red light district and county officers never interfere.

Here is my suggestion on the piece. Suppose we write it stating conditions as they exist, refer to Grosho as the "Dago", Durant as Jack, feature pictures of the houses he controls. Then we will cover the same situation in Tucson.

From a libel angle, the city of Phoenix can hardly sue. The houses exist; everyone knows it; and for your personal information, the chief of police is a silent partner of Grosho. If the Dago wants to sue, what can he complain of? He does own the leases. The gals call him boss, and any kind of publicity would hurt his business.

Besides the possibility of an interesting story, I believe we might kick up enough public sentiment to force a general house-cleaning. The article can be anonymous or with a fictitious by-line. If Grosho does find out that I wrote it, I don't think he'll get too tough. A close personal friend of mine takes office as Sheriff on January 1, and the Dago will really feel the heat if he complains.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Shadegg